



United States Senator • New Hampshire

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 14, 1989

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HUMPHREY TESTIMONY BEFORE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Attached is the statement of U.S. Senator Gordon J. Humphrey (R-NH) before the House Foreign Affairs Committee regarding Afghanistan.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR GORDON J. HUMPHREY
BEFORE THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
JUNE 14, 1989

MR. CHAIRMAN, THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY.

IN RECENT WEEKS, SOME ACCOUNTS OF THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN HAVE PORTRAYED IT AS A STALEMATE. EVEN WORSE, SOME ACCOUNTS HAVE PORTRAYED THE STRUGGLE AS MERELY A "CIVIL WAR" AND BY IMPLICATION A STRUGGLE IN WHOSE OUTCOME WE SHOULD HAVE LITTLE INTEREST. SOME ACCOUNTS ASSERT THE UNITED STATES AND PAKISTAN HAVE DECIDED TO OPT FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, AS THOUGH THAT IS A NEW POLICY AND REPRESENTS AN ABANDONMENT OF THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE. IN MY VIEW, SUCH ACCOUNTS RESULT FROM MISUNDERSTANDINGS OF FACT.

IS THERE A STALEMATE? THERE IS NOT. IT'S EASY TO UNDERSTAND WHY SOME MIGHT PERCEIVE A STALEMATE, WHEN, FIRST OF ALL, ONE RECALLS THE PREDICTIONS THAT THE KABUL REGIME WOULD FALL AUTOMATICALLY UPON THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS. THERE WAS NEVER ANY GROUNDS FOR SUCH SELF-DELUSION, FOR THE SOVIETS MADE IT CLEAR FROM THE START THAT THEY WOULD ATTEMPT TO KEEP THEIR PUPPET REGIME IN POWER BY ALL MEANS SHORT OF CONTINUED MILITARY OCCUPATION. INDEED, THE SOVIETS LEFT BEHIND A MOUNTAIN OF WEAPONRY AND HAVE PROVIDED A CONTINUOUS RESUPPLY SO MASSIVE THAT IT MIGHT EXCEED LAST YEAR'S LEVELS. SECOND, FIGHTING ALWAYS COMES TO A VIRTUAL HALT BETWEEN NOVEMBER AND JUNE, WHEN THE MOUNTAINS ARE BLOCKED BY SNOW AND IT IS LITERALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO RESUPPLY THE RESISTANCE FORCES. INDEED, THIS YEAR'S SNOWFALL WAS THE HEAVIEST IN DECADES. AND IT ISN'T ONLY A PROBLEM OF SNOW, THERE IS THE ADDED PROBLEM OF SWOLLEN RIVERS IN THE SPRING RUN-OFF. TO SAY THERE IS A STALEMATE BEFORE THE FIGHTING SEASON BEGINS, IS ON THE FACE OF IT ILLOGICAL.

IT IS TRUE, THE RESISTANCE HAS FAILED SO FAR TO TAKE JALALABAD. BUT, AGAIN, BEAR IN MIND, THE KABUL REGIME HAS BEEN ABLE TO CONCENTRATE ITS FORCES AT JALALABAD, BECAUSE FIGHTING ELSEWHERE HAS BEEN NEGLIGIBLE. VERY SOON THE KABUL REGIME WILL FIND ITSELF THINLY STRETCHED, AS FIGHTING RESUMES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

ONE FURTHER POINT ABOUT JALALABAD. READING THE REPORTS OVER THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS, ONE GAINS THE IMPRESSION THAT THE RESISTANCE HAVE BEEN FIRING UPON THE CITY WITHOUT RESTRAINT, CAUSING LARGE NUMBERS OF NEEDLESS CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. ONE GAINS THE IMPRESSION THAT JALALABAD, THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CITY IN AFGHANISTAN, IS BEING UTTERLY DESTROYED. MR. CHAIRMAN, I INVITE MY COLLEAGUES TO REQUEST AN INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING. I INVITE THEM TO LOOK AT THE OVERHEAD PHOTOS OF EXCELLENT QUALITY, AS I HAVE AS RECENTLY

AS ONE WEEK AGO. MY COLLEAGUES WILL SEE THAT THE CITY HAS HARDLY BEEN TOUCHED. TRY TO FIND EVEN ONE ROOFTOP DESTROYED, TRY TO FIND ONE DAMAGED STRUCTURE. HOWEVER, THEN VIEW PHOTOS OF AREAS OUTSIDE THE CITY, WHERE THE KABUL REGIME'S MILITARY FORTIFICATIONS LIE, AND YOU WILL SEE A PROFUSION OF CRATERS AND DESTROYED STRUCTURES. THE PHOTO EVIDENCE IS QUITE CONVINCING: THE CITY OF JALALABAD HAS SUFFERED ONLY LIGHT DAMAGE. THE RESISTANCE HAVE NOT BEEN INDISCRIMINATE IN THEIR FIRING. THEY HAVE BEEN CAREFUL, BECAUSE, IN FACT, MANY OF THEM HAVE RELATIVES IN THE CITY.

THE SECOND QUESTION IS, IS THIS JUST A "CIVIL WAR" AND, BY IMPLICATION, A STRUGGLE ABOUT WHOSE OUTCOME WE SHOULD FEEL AMBIVALENT? LET US NOT FORGET, MR. CHAIRMAN, THAT BEFORE BEING ELEVATED BY HIS SOVIET PATRONS, MR. NAJIBULLAH WAS THE HEAD OF THE AFGHAN VERSION OF THE KGB. LET US NOT FORGET THAT HE AND HIS PARTY COOPERATED IN A GENOCIDE AGAINST THE AFGHAN PEOPLE COSTING WELL OVER ONE MILLION LIVES. LET US NOT FORGET THE PDPA COOPERATED WITH THE SOVIETS IN LITTERING THE COUNTRYSIDE WITH MILLIONS OF MINES THAT HAVE TORN OFF THE LEGS OF THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN AND WILL TEAR OFF YET MORE THOUSANDS OF LEGS FOR YEARS TO COME. THIS IS NO CIVIL WAR. THIS IS A STRUGGLE TO OVERTHROW AN ILLEGITIMATE REGIME IMPOSED BY BRUTAL FORCE AT THE POINT OF 125,000 SOVIET BAYONNETS.

THE MASSIVE SACRIFICE ON THE PART OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE MAKES IT A MORAL IMPERATIVE FOR THE UNITED STATES AND PAKISTAN TO CONTINUE TO SEEK GENUINE SELF-DETERMINATION FOR AFGHANISTAN. LET US NEVER YIELD TO THE EXPEDIENT OF RE-DEFINING THIS IMPORTANT STRUGGLE AS A CIVIL WAR AND, IN SO DOING, OPENING THE BACK DOOR TO A SELL-OUT. THAT WOULD BE A GREAT TRAGEDY FOR AFGHANISTAN. LET US NOT PERMIT THE SOVIETS TO WIN THOUGH CLEVER POLITICAL MANEUVERING WHAT THEY FAILED TO WIN BY FORCE OF ARMS. THE SOVIETS HAVE LEARNED AN IMPORTANT LESSON ABOUT THE LIMITS OF MILITARISM AND IMPERIALISM. THAT LESSON, I BELIEVE CONTRIBUTED SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE REDUCTION OF THE INFLUENCE OF MILITARY SPHERES WITHIN THE SOVIET SYSTEM UNDER PERESTROIKA. LET US NEVER ERASE THAT LESSON BY ACCOMODATING A SELL-OUT OF THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE. THE STRUGGLE IN AFGHANISTAN IS NOT A CIVIL WAR. IT IS A STRUGGLE TO OVERTHROW A REGIME IMPOSED BY A FOREIGN ARMY OF OCCUPATION.

THE THIRD QUESTION IS, HAS THERE BEEN A CHANGE IN U. S. AND PAKISTANI POLICY? DOES THE RECENT TALK OF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT MEAN THERE HAS BEEN A BACKING AWAY FROM SUPPORT OF THE RESISTANCE? THE ANSWER IS NO, BECAUSE OUR POLICY AND THAT OF PAKISTAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO SEEK A POLITICAL SOLUTION, USING MILITARY LEVERAGE TO SECURE THE RIGHT KIND OF POLITICAL SOLUTION.

I QUOTE A LETTER FROM SECRETARY SCHULTZ DATED JANUARY 17, 1987, "OUR OBJECTIVE IS A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT,

CONSISTENT WITH UN RESOLUTIONS, AND PREDICATED ON THE PROMPT AND COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS AND FULL SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN."

I CITE A STATE DEPARTMENT UPDATE OF DECEMBER, 1987: "THE U.S. SEEKS A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN THAT BRINGS ABOUT THE PROMPT AND COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS AND SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE AFGHAN PEOPLE. THIS IS OUTLINED IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS PASSED OVERWHELMINGLY EACH YEAR FOR THE PAST 8 YEARS."

FROM THE REMARKS OF AMBASSADOR HERBERT S. OKUN BEFORE THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 10, 1987, "MY GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS THESE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES. IT SUPPORTS AS WELL THE SEARCH FOR A NEGOTIATED POLITICAL SETTLEMENT TO END THE AGONY THE AFGHAN PEOPLE HAVE SO LONG ENDURED. THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TOWARD THE AFGHANISTAN SITUATION IS CLEAR AND CONSISTENT. THE UNITED STATES SEEKS AN EARLY SETTLEMENT WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE PROMPT WITHDRAWAL OF THE INVADING FORCES AND FOR THE RESTORATION TO THE AFGHAN PEOPLE OF FREEDOM TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN POLITICAL COURSE. THE UNITED STATES FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IS POSSIBLE."

BY AN INCREASING MARGIN, THE UN FOR NINE YEARS RUNNING ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS URGING THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES AND SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE AFGHAN PEOPLE.

AND JUST LAST WEEK, THE PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN, IN HER IMPRESSIVE ADDRESS TO THE JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS, REMINDED US THAT OUR OBJECTIVE HAS BEEN SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN. THE PRIME MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT FOR TEN YEARS THE UNITED STATES HAS STOOD SIDE BY SIDE WITH PAKISTAN IN SUPPORTING THE CAUSE OF A FREE AFGHANISTAN.

YET, APPARENTLY, SOME WOULD ABANDON THAT CAUSE. SOME WOULD SIEZE UPON THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL AS NEGATING OUR SECOND OBJECTIVE OF LONG STANDING, SELF-DETERMINATION. FOR ALL OF THESE YEARS WE HAVEN'T BEEN JUST SAYING WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES. WE HAVE BEEN SAYING WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES AND SELF-DETERMINATION. THEY ARE SEPARATE AND DISTINCT. SELF-DETERMINATION IS NOT FORCED POWER-SHARING WITH A NAZI-LIKE REGIME. FORCING THE RESISTANCE INTO POWER-SHARING BY CUTTING OF THE FLOW OF WEAPONS WOULD BE A SELL-OUT, NOT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SELF-DETERMINATION.

PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO IDENTIFIED THE OBSTACLE TO GENUINE SELF-DETERMINATION, WHEN SHE TOLD A RECENT PRESS CONFERENCE IN PAKISTAN: "IF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IS NOT IN ASCENDANCY AT THE MOMENT, IT IS BECAUSE OF THE RECENT SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN. THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION IN KABUL IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE PAKISTAN-BASED MUJAHIDEEN, THE IRAN-BASED MUJAHIDEEN, THE AFGHAN COMMANDERS, AND EVEN EX-KING ZAHIR

SHAH." SHE ADDED THAT THE IMPEDIMENT TO AN AFGHAN SETTLEMENT IS "AN OBSTINATE REFUSAL OF THE ADMINISTRATION IN KABUL TO STEP DOWN."

IN SHORT, MR. CHAIRMAN, THERE IS NO STALEMATE, THE FIRST FIGHTING SEASON SINCE THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL IS JUST BEGINNING. THE STRUGGLE IN AFGHANISTAN IS NOT A CIVIL WAR AND ONE WHOSE OUTCOME CAN LITTLE CONCERN US. IT IS A STRUGGLE TO OUST A REGIME INSTALLED AT THE POINT OF 125,000 SOVIET BAYONETS. AS PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO HAS ASSERTED, THAT REGIME IS THE BARRIER TO SELF-DETERMINATION. AND FINALLY, THE RECENT REMARKS BY THE U. S. AND PAKISTAN ABOUT A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT ARE NOTHING NEW. OUR POLICY OF LONG-STANDING IS TO SEEK SUCH A SETTLEMENT, USING MILITARY LEVERAGE TO SECURE THE RIGHT KIND OF SETTLEMENT. AND MRS. BHUTTO IS RIGHT WHEN SHE DEFINES THE RIGHT KIND OF SETTLEMENT AS ONE WHICH EXCLUDES THE PDPA REGIME IN KABUL.

PRESIDENT BUSH HAS REAFFIRMED OUR COMMITMENT TO SELF-DETERMINATION BY REAFFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT THE RESISTANCE FORCES. AND LET US REMEMBER THE WORDS WE HEARD JUST A WEEK AGO IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WHEN PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO SPOKE OF OUR JOINT COMMITMENT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, AND THEN URGING STEADFASTNESS SAID, "LET US NOT AT THIS STAGE OUT OF OR FATIGUE BECOME INDIFFERENT. WE CANNOT, WE MUST NOT ABANDON THEIR CAUSE."